



Blue Dog Blueprint for Fiscal Reform

Budget Enforcement Legislative Tool “BELT” Act of 2010

Throughout this financial crisis and recession, American families have had to make tough choices everyday; the federal government should also.

In order to put our country back on a fiscally sustainable path, the federal government must take a business approach to our country’s balance sheets. This will require Congress and the president to work cooperatively to eliminate spending programs that are duplicative, inefficient, and outdated. The BELT Act creates a legislative tool to broker legislative and executive cooperation to avoid the traditional partisan differences and turf wars that have paralyzed Washington and led to explosive deficits in the past.

As working families in our districts tighten their belts, Congress must do the same.

The Budget Enforcement Legislative Tool “BELT” Act of 2010 – a critical component of the [Blue Dog Blueprint for Fiscal Reform](#) – takes steps to restore fiscal discipline to the federal government by forcing Congress and the president to target, reduce and eliminate specific pork projects and wasteful government programs that continue to drain the federal pocketbook.

Known as “expedited rescission,” this commonsense budget enforcement tool passed the House with broad bipartisan support in the early 90’s, and has been successful in helping members of Congress and the administration to identify and eliminate wasteful and unnecessary government spending.

Under the leadership of Representative Walt Minnick of Idaho, the Blue Dogs will work to promote this commonsense legislation in the House. Additionally, Senator Tom Carper of Delaware is pushing companion legislation in the U.S. Senate to achieve a commonsense solution to cutting wasteful spending.



Specifically, the BELT Act of 2010 would:

- Give the president three days after signing an appropriations act to submit a list of proposed budget cuts to Congress.
- Require Congress to act on the President's list of proposed cuts in a timely manner by an up or down vote in both chambers.
- Give Congress and the president the ability to reduce or eliminate earmarks.
- Allow Congress and the president to zero-out unauthorized programs and reduce an authorized program's budget up to 25 percent.
- Allow the executive branch to pinpoint wasteful pork spending, while maintaining the ability of the majorities of the House and Senate to exercise their will on specific spending items with an up or down vote.

As independent voices for fiscal responsibility and accountability, the Blue Dogs recognize that the system is broken regardless of which party is in charge. It is time to change the way Washington operates, and begin working together in earnest to put the country back on secure economic footing.